

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

01-101

Orleans

EAS.1281

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): North Eastham

Photograph



Address: 95 Harmes Way

Historic Name: Reuben W. and Jesse Horton House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: [1939-1948]

Source: 1938 USGS aerial survey, deed research

Style/Form: No Style

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete piers

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

House moved on-site and placed on raised foundation, small additions on each side (ca. 2012)

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☐ yes ☒ **Date:** On-site, ca. 2012

Acreage: 0.91 acres

Setting: This house is located along Sunken Meadow Beach, named after Sunken Meadow – a salt marsh across the street to the east. This stretch of dune along Harmes Way is sparsely settled with houses from the mid-20th to the 21st centuries.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

This house was moved from its concrete foundation closer to the beach in ca. 2012 (see photo of former foundation, Photo 3). The house now rests on tall concrete piers. The form of this one-story house consists of a central block with stepped-back ells on both sides, and an enclosed porch with a lower-pitched shed roof on the bay side. The elevations are clad in wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles. Windows include a mix of modern, thermal 6/6 windows and casement windows.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay in Orleans and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved.

In the early-20th century, the Sunken Meadow area was owned by Robert Horton and his wife, Jennie (Landerkin), whom he married in Wellfleet in 1884. Robert R. Horton (1856-1917) was born in Eastham. In 1918, the year after he died, Jennie Horton sold the Sunken Meadow property to Stanley E. Horton of Newton, "consisting of meadow land, ice houses, shore land and the privileges appurtenant hereto."¹ The kinship between these two Horton families is likely but not yet known. Stanley Horton (1877-1945) was born in Eastham to Rueben H. and Cynthia A. (Clark) Horton. Stanley Horton was listed in census records as the treasurer of a beef company in the 1920 census. In the 1930 and 1940 census, however, he was listed without an occupation. Perhaps he had retired, or perhaps he fell victim to the Great Depression. What is known is that in 1937, Stanley Horton lost the Sunken Meadow property to the Town of Eastham through a tax taking.² That deed described the property as consisting of 17.7 acres of upland and 51.9 acres of meadow. He does not appear to have built a cottage by that time, at least in this location. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) conducts periodic aerial photographic surveys of Cape Cod. The first was in 1938, and that aerial survey shows this portion of the dune as vacant (Photo 4).

In 1939, the Town of Eastham sold the Sunken Meadow property for \$221.18 to Reuben W. Horton of Reading, MA.³ Again, kinship is likely but not yet known. Reuben William Horton (1864-1945) was also born in Eastham, the only son of Isaiah H. and Rachel C. (Bearse) Horton. He married Jesse Bearse in Eastham in 1889. By the time he purchased this property in 1939, he was

¹ Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Book 362/Page 207.

² Book 533/ Page 279.

³ Book 560/ Page 461.

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retired, living in Reading with his wife, their daughter Gladys and her husband, salesman Edward A. Ryan. In 1945, Reuben Horton sold this property to himself, his daughter Gladys Ryan, and his son Clyde K. Horton.⁴

The Sunken Meadow property passed to their two children, and in November 1948, they sold it to August F. B. and Miriam C. Petersen of Cohasset.⁵ The property still consisted of 17.7 acres of upland and 51.9 acres of meadow. The first map or image that shows buildings in this location is the 1952 USGS aerial survey (Photo 5). None of the deeds reference buildings, but it seems likely that the Hortons built at least one cottage on this beachfront property sometime after Reuben bought the land in 1939.

Immediately after buying the property, the Petersens prepared a plan of the Sunken Meadow property, dividing it into four lots.⁶ What may be this cottage is shown on Lot 1 (Figure 2). That plan was recorded in May of 1950, and on June 1, the Petersens registered the land in Land Court.⁷ In November, the Petersens sold Lots 1 to 4 to Humphrey Nolen of Canton, MA.⁸ In 1952, Nolen sold the four lots to Willis A. Neal, also of Canton.⁹ In 1956, Neal sold them to William B. and Alma Sanblom of Eastham and Neil and Leona Avery of Dedham.¹⁰ It was they who recorded a subdivision in 1956 of Lot 1, with this house on Lot 13 (Figure 2).¹¹

In 1957, the Averys sold just this Lot 13 to Katherine T. and William B. Brookfield of Sharon, MA.¹² Katherine died in 1962 and William in 1981. Following his death, the property was sold to Richard J. Pushkin, Sr., Barabara Sawuda, and Roberta Zidik (addresses not given).¹³ In 1993, they sold it to Anthony A. Luongo and James H. Taylor of Boston.¹⁴ Three years later, they sold it to George M. and Susan J. Amato of NY, NY.¹⁵ The property remains in the Amato family.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

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United States Geological Survey. Aerial Survey 1938-2020,

<https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/cape-cod-chronology-viewer/>.

www.ancestry.com - Vital records.

⁴ Book 624/ Page 151.

⁵ Book 707/ Page 589.

⁶ Plan of Land 21633-A.

⁷ Certificate of Title #11662.

⁸ Deed not on Registry website.

⁹ Cert. of Title #13906.

¹⁰ Cert. of Title #20183.

¹¹ Plan of Land 21633-C.

¹² Cert. of Title #20813.

¹³ Cert. of Title #89677.

¹⁴ Cert. of Title #129971.

¹⁵ Cert. of Title #142113.

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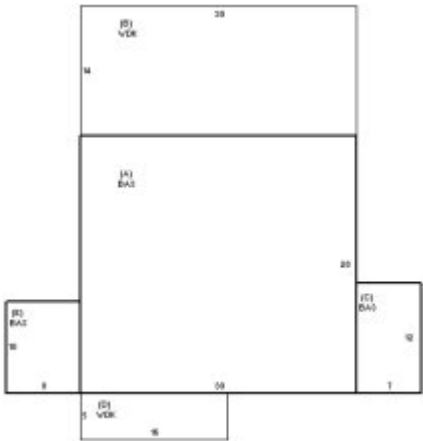


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View from Harmes Way, looking southwest.



Photo 3. View from beach, looking east (arrows to former foundation added).

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Photo 4. Detail of 1938 USGS aerial survey.

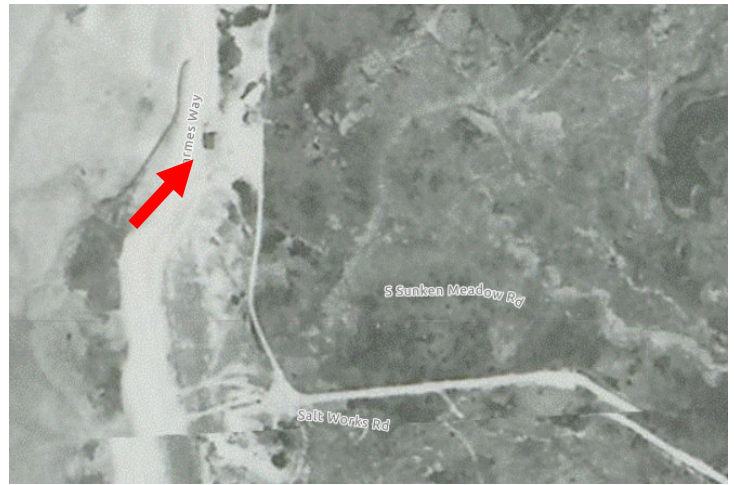


Photo 5. Detail of 1952 USGS aerial survey (arrow added).

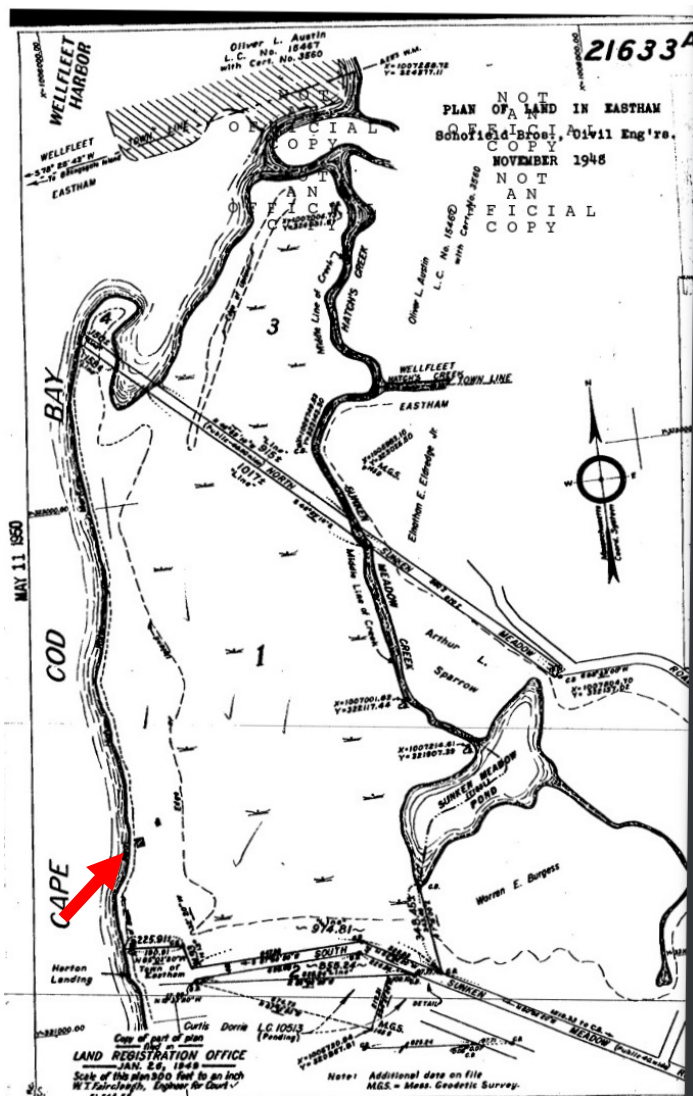


Figure 2. 1947 Plan of Land 21633-A (arrow added).

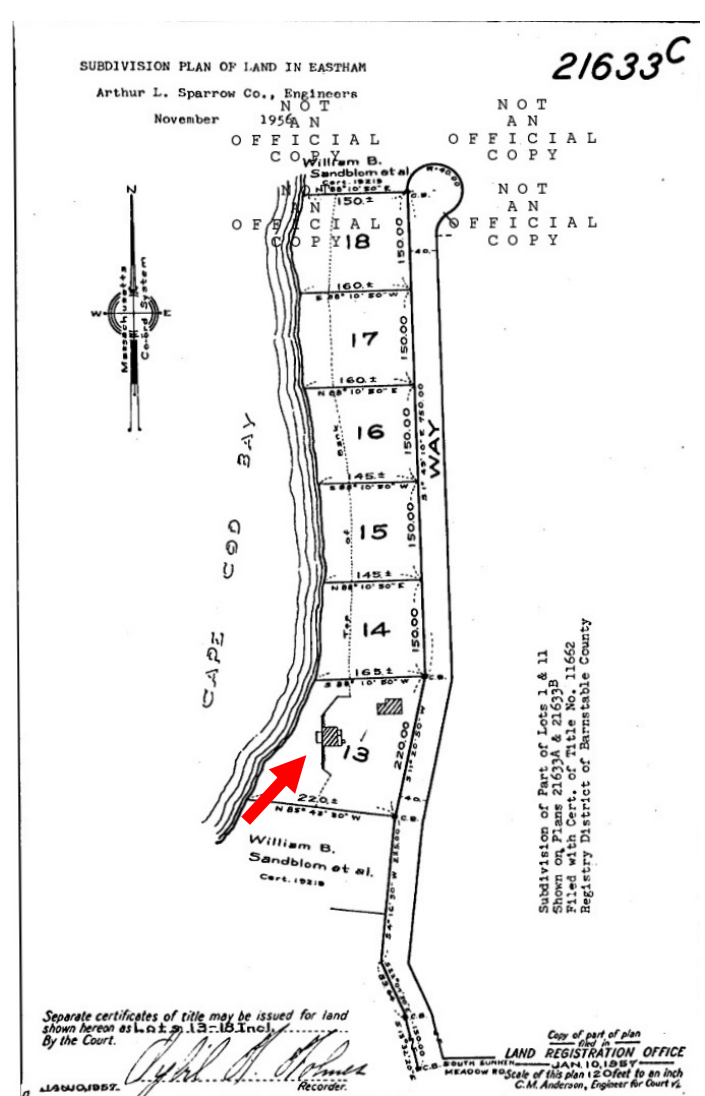


Figure 3. 1956 Plan of Land 21633-C (arrow added).